

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
DHA-02 IO-14 AID-05 USSS-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00
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O 022310Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7636

AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE

WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN JOSE 2546

WHITE HOUSE FOR MARY HOYT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, CS (CARTER, ROSALYNN)

SUBJECT: LOCAL REACTION TO MRS. CARTER'S VISIT TO COSTA RICA

1. SUMMARY: COSTA RICANS AND GOCR VIEWED MRS. CARTER'S VISIT AS MANIFESTATION OF TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP, SHARED DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS, AND AGREEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. SUBSTANTIVE TALKS COVERED HOW US AND COSTA RICA CAN COOPERATE IN HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES, TRADE, CENTRAL AMERICAN/CARIBBEAN PROBLEMS. MRS. CARTER'S
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RECEPTION WAS WARM AND AT TIMES EFFUSIVE. MRS. CARTER GAINED RESPECT OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, MEDIA, AND PUBLIC IN GENERAL WITH HER "KNOWLEDGE" OF PROBLEMS OF LATIN AMERICA, HER SURETY AND HER APLOMB" ACCORDING TO COUNTRY'S LEADING NEWSPAPER. END SUMMARY.

2. MRS. CARTER'S 24-HOUR VISIT TO COSTA RICA HAS BEEN

VIEWED

HERE BY GOVERNMENT LEADERS, MEDIA, AND AVERAGE COSTA RICANS ALIKE AS A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BLEND OF GOOD WILL WITH SUBSTANCE, AND A SOLID DEMONSTRATION OF INTEREST OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN COSTA RICA AND LATIN AMERICA.

3. MRS. CARTER RECEIVED REGULAR OUTPOURINGS OF GOOD WILL. TONE OF VISIT WAS SET BY WARM, EFFUSIVE, COLORFUL AIRPORT RECEPTION MAY 31, WITH PRESENCE OF HUNDREDS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN WAVING US AND COSTA RICAN FLAGS FROM BALCONY AND ON TARMAC. THIS TYPE SCENE WAS REPEATED IN SPITE OF AFTERNOON AND EVENING RAIN, IN VISITS TO FOREIGN MINISTRY, PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, BNC, AND NATIONAL THEATER.

THERE WAS AN ESPECIALLY LARGE TURNOUT JUNE 1 AT THE SCHOOL IN ALAJUELA. AT SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL A HIGHLY FRIENDLY ADULT CROWD FROM WHOM "VIVAS" WERE HEARD FILLED THE STREET THE LENGTH OF THE BLOCK.

4. SUBSTANTIVE NATURE OF VISIT PERMEATED WELCOMING REMARKS OF FONMIN FACIO, COMMENTARY BY FACIO AND PRESIDENT ODUBER TO MEDIA AND, OF COURSE, MRS. CARTER'S STATEMENTS. HUMAN RIGHTS AND STRONG TIES WITH DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES WERE THE BASIC THEMES HIGHLIGHTED. FONMIN FACIO SET SUCH TONE IN HIS AIRPORT REMARKS, WHICH QUOTED EXTENSIVELY FROM PRESIDENT CARTER'S NOTRE DAME ADDRESS, AND STATES:
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"MRS. CARTER ARRIVES IN COSTA RICA...AS GOOD-WILL AMBASSADOR OF PRESIDENT OF US., SHE HAS CAPACITY TO DISCUSS REGIONAL PROBLEMS WITH POLITICAL LEADERS... SHE IS READY TO PRESENT FOR OUR CONSIDERATION A TRUE VERSION OF THE WAY PRESIDENT CARTER PROPOSES TO IMPROVE INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

"WE WELCOME MRS. CARTER AS THE EXQUISITE LADY WHO HAS BEEN A DIGNIFIED COMPANION OF HER ILLUSTRIOUS HUSBAND, PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, IN THE REALM OF HIS HOME, HIS WORK AND IN THE POLITICAL AGJVA. WE GREET HER ALSO AS A VEKAT CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES WHO, WITHOUT LOOSING HER ENCHANTING FEMININITY, HAS STRUGGLED FOR THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND WHO HAS TAKEN GREAT INTEREST IN THE SOLUTION OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF HER COUNTRY."

AFTER EXPRESSING STRONG SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES, FACIO SAID:

"YOU MAY INFORM YOUR HUSBAND THAT IN THIS SMALL CORNER OF AMERICA DEMOCRACY IS EFFECTIVELY PRACTICED, HUMAN RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED.

"WE HAVE STRONG HOPES THAT IN THE PERSON OF PRESIDENT CARTER THE TRUE FREE WORLD HAS FOUND, AT LAST, A GREAT LEADER, CAPABLE OF INJECTING DEMOCRACY WITH THAT GREAT FIGHTING FAITH THAT IT NEEDS IN ORDER TO RESIST THE ATTACKS FROM ITS ENEMIES AND TO PROMOTE FREEDOM AND JUSTICE IN ALL REGIONS OF THE WORLD."

5. AFTER ONE-HOUR BILATERAL MEETING AT CASA PRESIDENCIAL MAY 31, PRESIDENT ODUBER STATED THAT HE AND MRS. CARTER SPOKE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SPECIFIC TERMS OF HOW TO IMPROVE INSTITUTIONS THAT DEAL WITH THEM IN THE UN AND OAS. ODUBER ALSO SAID THAT HE SPOKE TO MRS. CARTER OF PRIORITY TREATMENT--IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE--FOR COUNTRIES THAT RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS.

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WHITE HOUSE FOR MARY HOYT

6. MRS. CARTER'S PUBLIC REMARKS DURING VISIT EMPHASIZED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN TWO DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, WAYS TO COOPERATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AND OPPORTUNITY TO EXPALIN US VIEWS ON ISSUES OF MUTURAL CONCERN. AT PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 1 (TEXT TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY) SHE RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (WHAT IS SOURCE OF CARTER FAMILY "LOVE AND DEVOTION" TO THIS THEME; WHETHER IN US HUMAN RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED 100 PERCENT, IF US SHOULD PROVIDE INDUCEMENTS TO COUNTRIES THAT RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS);

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BELIZE; COSTA RICA'S MEAT QUOTA AND TRADE PROBLEMS WITH US IN GENERAL. REGARDING LATTER, MRS. CARTER SAID SHE WOULD TALK WITH PRESIDENT RE GREATER MARKET ACCESS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, BUT THAT PRESIDENT'S APPROACH IS "NOT TO PROMISE THINGS THAT WE CANNOT DELIVER." MRS. CARTER RECEIVED QUESTIONS ON VESCO FROM US NEWS-PEOPLE ONLY--A POINT THAT COSTA RICAN MEDIA DID NOT MISS. SHE STATED THAT VESCO WAS NOT DISCUSSED AND THAT "ONLY ANSWER I CAN GIVE YOU IS THAT QUESTION IS UNDER REVIEW BY OUR JUSTICE DEPT."

7. INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES EMPHASIZED DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF COSTA RICA THAT ARE OF SPECIAL PRIDE. MRS. CARTER'S VISIT TO SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL WAS WIDELY ACCEPTED BY COSTA RICANS AS FINEST TRIBUTE THAT SHE COULD PAY TO COSTA RICA'S DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. MRS. CARTER STATED AT PRESS CONFERENCE THAT VISIT TO TSE WAS ONE OF MOST IM-PORTANT THINGS SHE DID ON VISIT BECAUSE EXISTENCE OF THIS INDEPENDENT INSTITUTION SETS COSTA RICA APART FROM WORLD. COSTA RICANS LEFT POLITICS AT THE DOOR TO ATTEND NATIONAL THEATER YOUTH SYMPHONY PER-FORMANCE AND RECEPTION AFTERWARD OFFERED BY PRESIDENT AND MRS. ODUBER. MRS. CARTER'S EXPRESSED HOPE TO HAVE NATIONAL YOUTH SYMPHONY PLAY AT WHITE HOUSE WAS MOST FAVORABLY RECEIVED; COSTA RICANS--INCLUDING PRESIDENT ODUBER--ARE BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT IT ALREADY. RECI-PROCAL LUNCHEON BROUGHT GOOD CROSS SECTION OF COSTA RICANS TOGETHER IN INFORMAL ATMOSPHERE THAT COSTA RICANS LIKE. MRS. CARTER'S GRACIOUS REMARKS GIVEN ENTIRELY IN SPANISH WERE PARTICULARLY WELL RECEIVED. VISIT TO SCHOOL IN ALAJUELA GAVE MRS. CARTER OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE

RESPECT FOR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND ITS SERVICES IN AREA
OFTEN WOEFULLY NEGLECTED IN LATIN AMERICA; EXCEPTIONAL
CHILDREN. IT PROVIDED PRESS WITH HUMAN INTEREST ELEMENT
THAT BALANCED IMAGE OF VISIT NICELY. AT BNC MRS. CARTER
PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED THE VIGOROUS CULTURAL ROLE OF BI-
NATIONAL CENTER AT SAME TIME THAT SHE GREETED EMPLOYEE
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MISSION.

8. MEDIA COVERAGE WAS PROMINENT, EXTENSIVE, ACCURATE AND
HIGHLY FAVORABLE. REPORTERS BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY
EFCOMMENTED ON THE WARM FEELINGS, POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS
MRS. CARTER GENERATED, AND ON HER SIMPLICITY AND HUMAN
QUALITIES. MOST NEWS STORIES EMPHASIZED MRS. CARTER'S
FAVORABLE REMARKS ON COSTA RICA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD
AND DEVOTION TO DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, ANDHHER REAFFIRMATION
OF UUY COMMITMENTS TO THESE VALUES. LEADING DAILY "LA
NACION" JUNE 1 HIGHLIGHTED MRS. CARTER'S
ARRIVAL STATEMENT REMARKS THAT "COSTA RICA HAS BEEN THE
SOURCE OF CREATIVE IDEAS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA" WHILE
PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY "EXCELSIOR" JUNE 2 FOCUSED ON HER
COMMENT AT THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL (TSE) THAT THAT
INSTITUTION DISTINGUISHES COSTA RICA'S DEMOCRATIC VALUES
BEFORE THE WORLD. T.V. COVERAGE AND LEADING RADIO STATIONS
EMPHASIZED THIS ASPECT AS WELL. OPPOSITION DAILY "LA REPUBLICA"
EMPHASIZED BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL
INTEREST, PARTICULARLY TRADE. JUNE 2 "LA REPUBLICA"
LEAD QUOTED FIRST LADY'S JUNE 1 PRESS CONFERENCE COMMENT
THAT USG UNDERSTANDS COSTA RICA'S PROBLEM IN GAINING
ACCESS TO US MARKETS. ONLY DISCORDANT NOTE IN OTHERWISE
POSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE WAS UNIFORMLY EXPRESSED MEDIA
IRRITATION WITH SECURITY EXCESSES OF USSS (SEPTTEL).

9. COMMENT: COSTA RICANS WELCOMED MRS. CARTER'S VISIT AS
MANIFESTATION OF THE TRADITIONAL BILATERAL FRIENDSHIP THAT EXISTS,
AND AS RECOGNITION OF SHARED DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND

STRONG COSTA RICAN POSITIONS ON HUMAN
RIGHTS. AT SAME TIME, NATURAL RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL
FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION MANIFESTED ITSELF. COSTA
RICANS WELCOMED AND APPRECIATED THE ATTENTION, AND WERE
PARTICULARLY PROUD OF THE VISIT EMPHASIS ON AN INSTITU-
TION THAT IS ABOVE REPROACH IN THESE POLITICALLY ACTIVE
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DAYS--THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL. THEY AND COSTA
RICA'S LEADERS ALSO CAME AWAY WITH A GENUINE RESPECT FOR

MRS. CARTER'S ABILITIES IN DEALING WITH THE ISSUES.
LEADING DAILY "LA NACION" SUMMED IT UP WELL IN COM-
MENTARY ON HER JUNE 1 PRESS CONFERENCE: "SHE SHOWED GREAT
KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT CONCERN LATIN AMERICAN
COUNTRIES, AND SHE DISPLAYED GREAT SURETY AND APLOMB."
WE AGREE.
KILDAY

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